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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BOST).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,

June 14, 2016.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MIKE BOST to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 5, 2016, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

END HUNGER NOW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, the 1996 welfare reform law imposed new limitations on able-bodied adults without dependents, known as ABAWDs, receiving food assistance through the SNAP program. These 18- to 49-year-olds who do not have children or serve as caretakers to other individuals have access to SNAP for only 3 months in any 3-year period when they are not employed at least half time or are in a work training program.

It is important to note that the law doesn't require States to offer job training programs—most do not—and SNAP recipients have their benefits cut off after 3 months even if they are searching for work or are working less than 20 hours per week.

So who are the ABAWDs?

While some on the other side of the aisle tend to stereotype these vulnerable adults, the truth of the matter is there is no one face to the ABAWD population. This is a very diverse group. About 45 percent are women. Close to one-third are over 40 years old. Many have limited educational experiences, with more than 80 percent having no more than a high school education or a GED. Some have mental health issues, difficult histories of substance abuse, or are ex-offenders who have nowhere else to turn, and as many as 100,000 are veterans.

These childless adults on SNAP are extremely poor and often experience chronic homelessness. They often turn to SNAP as a safety net when they lose their jobs, when their hours at work get cut, or when their wages are so low they are unable to make ends meet. Most childless adults on SNAP who are able to work do. At least 25 percent of these households work while receiving SNAP, and about 75 percent work in the year before or after receiving benefits. While many struggle with job insecurity, among those households that worked in a typical month while receiving SNAP or at some point during the following year, about half worked full time for 6 months or more in the year after they were on the program.

Because childless adults receive only limited government assistance, access to SNAP becomes a critical lifeline to these Americans who are living in poverty. After these vulnerable adults leave the SNAP program, research suggests that many continue to face incredible hardship. While some continue to struggle to find jobs, former SNAP

recipients who work tend to earn low wages that keep them in poverty. They struggle to get the healthy food they need. Often, they must eat less or skip a meal entirely because they simply have no money with which to purchase food.

A provision in the 1996 welfare law allows States to suspend the 3-month limit in areas with high and sustained unemployment. In the aftermath of the Great Recession, Democratic and Republican Governors requested and received waivers from the 3-month limit, and the limit has not been in effect in most States during the past several years. But as the economy continues to recover, fewer areas qualify for waivers despite the fact that many of these vulnerable Americans still struggle to find long-term, stable jobs. As these waivers expire this year, it is expected that more than 500,000 and as many as 1 million of our poorest neighbors will be cut off from SNAP. Thousands already began losing their benefits on April 1 as 23 States began implementing the time limits for the first time since before the recession.

These waivers are providing support as they were intended to: helping our communities overcome hardship and providing a lifeline to vulnerable adults who are unable to find work during difficult times. So I am greatly disappointed by the proposals offered by Speaker RYAN to eliminate the ability of States to request these waivers during times of economic hardship.

Mr. Speaker, cutting off food assistance for vulnerable adults who are unable to make ends meet is a rotten thing to do, and it only makes hunger worse in our communities. How does making hunger worse make it easier to get a job? Every single congressional district is home to Americans who are struggling with hunger. The hardships they face are exactly why such cuts are so cruel. These proposals are mean-spirited, political documents that are

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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based on the false narrative that people don't want to work.

If my Republican friends were serious about getting people back to work and responsibly moving those who can work off of public assistance, their budgets would reflect that, but they don't. Republicans have offered no guarantees that vulnerable Americans will have access to job training programs that will get them back to work. Many job training programs are already stretched incredibly thin. If Republicans were serious, they would increase job training funding so that more Americans could get the help they need to get back on their feet. And, at every turn, they have resisted calls to increase the minimum wage. Work ought to pay in this country.

I sometimes wonder if my friends on the other side of the aisle have ever met working people who are living in poverty and who rely on SNAP for access to food. The truth is their neatly packaged rhetoric doesn't match the reality of those who are working to make ends meet.

We must reject harmful attempts to limit SNAP participation for our vulnerable neighbors and, instead, work on solutions to end hunger now.

SYRIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOONEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, on May 1 of last year, I came to this floor to speak on behalf of the Syrian people. I called for stronger leadership from our Commander in Chief, President Barack Obama, in the Syrian conflict. Specifically, I urged the President to establish no-fly zones to protect innocent lives. At that time, 200,000 Syrians had already died.

The administration has failed to act, and, today, Syria remains in crisis. The number of Syrians killed through the civil war has now doubled to 400,000. Many of these casualties are civilians: women, children, doctors, and teachers. So, Mr. Speaker, I come to this floor again to say that this slaughter of innocent human life must end, and it will not end unless the United States takes the lead fearlessly and immediately.

I meet regularly with Syrian Americans who live in my congressional district in Charleston, West Virginia. They have told me the stories of their friends and families in the city of Aleppo, which is a financial and cultural center in Syria. Aleppo is now on fire and under siege. Just last week, a civilian bus was the victim of an airstrike where 10 were killed, including three women and two children.

Sadly, this type of violence is a daily occurrence in Aleppo and elsewhere in Syria. Hospitals, markets, schools, bus stations, warehouses: none of these places are off limits for bombings and destruction. If America does not take immediate actions to end the current

humanitarian crisis, thousands more will die, and we will look back on this period of history knowing that America failed both the Syrian people and the cause of freedom.

We must move quickly to protect the innocent civilians who are under attack. This means America must use its influence to stop the current flurry of airstrikes on civilian areas, and Russia must be part of this solution. If America fails to lead in negotiating a ceasefire immediately, the catastrophic losses of life will continue.

We must accomplish a longer term cessation of hostilities, and we must allow the Syrian people free movement so that the innocent are able to escape harm's way. A no-fly zone must be established so that Syria is able to heal into a place that promotes justice and freedom for all citizens.

Does this photo of Syria look familiar? You may remember seeing similar destruction in Bosnia almost 20 years ago. This is Bosnia. The war in Bosnia in the mid-1990s provides a thought-provoking blueprint as we search for solutions in Syria. With the disintegration of Yugoslavia in 1992, the region devolved into an ethnic civil war—first in Croatia, then in Bosnia. Serbian strongman Slobodan Milosevic began instituting a policy of ethnic cleansing by which whole populations were forced from their homes and were killed.

For 4 years, the United States remained passive in the conflict, but in the summer of 1995, under President Bill Clinton, America took decisive military action with a series of airstrikes that brought Milosevic to the bargaining table, that forced peace, and that, ultimately, removed Milosevic from power. Today, Bosnia and Croatia are flourishing countries and are top destinations for many international tourists. Here is Bosnia today.

We must apply these lessons of the war in Bosnia to the current conflict in Syria. The United States must take decisive leadership in returning long-term stability to Syria. Unless America and our allies are willing to use force, Russian and Syrian leaders will not respect us or have reason to negotiate peace.

To enable the citizens of Syria to live free from fear and to thrive, we must do at least three things: establish safe zones along Syria's border with Turkey; ramp up our efforts to train Syrian opposition forces who have proven they are not extremists; and help Syria institute a new coalition government. Peace in Syria is impossible while Assad remains in control. He has proven this point time and again by his reckless and evil use of chemical weapons and other cruel tools of war on his own people.

America cannot address the humanitarian crisis and restore long-term stability to Syria on our own. We must engage with our partners around the world who share a mutual interest in

the cause of freedom. But, no matter what, President Barack Obama must act now, or even more lives could be lost. I encourage my colleagues in this chamber to join me in this call to action.

ORLANDO SHOOTING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, we should all be concerned with the killing of innocents. Let's start right here in America where we are under attack.

We are all still reeling from the horrific violence in Orlando—49 killed, more than 50 wounded. It is the worst mass shooting in American history. The killer was someone who, in his own words, identified with ISIS, a madman's fury directed at the GLBT community, who were slaughtered in a place of comfort, release, and joy. It was especially jarring because this has been an unprecedented period of progress for the GLBT issues on every front. New landmarks have been achieved.

While this outrage is tragic, horrifying, and frustrating, it is important that people understand that the advocates of GLBT equality and of a rational approach to gun safety are not going to stop in their efforts for reform. The unprecedented outpouring of support in the wake of Orlando ought to be a source of comfort and strength for the GLBT community as people everywhere reaffirm their support and stand in solidarity for full equality. Our Pride Parade in Portland this weekend is going to be larger and more enthusiastic than ever.

The equality tide is not going to turn, and the silly bathroom police in North Carolina is not where America is going or even where North Carolina will be in the future. While it seems gun violence continues unchecked by sensible gun safety laws, that tide, too, is poised to turn. We know what to do. No one needs an assault rifle to hunt; although it is very efficient to slaughter little children in school or people in a nightclub.

There are dozens of simple steps that can be taken to protect Americans, steps which are, in fact, supported broadly by the public, not just by the majority of Americans but by most gun owners themselves. We should start with universal background checks for all gun purchases. Someone on the terrorist watch list should not be able to purchase a gun; no fly, no buy. If we can personalize our cell phones so that others can't use them, we ought to be able to make smart guns so that others cannot use guns unauthorized.

□ 1015

When somebody fails a background check, that ought to be reported to the authorities, who it was, and why.

We can repeal the inane prohibition on gun safety research that stops us